

THE GULL



Golden Gate Audubon Society

Berkeley, California

Volume 73

Number 9

October 1991

NATURAL HISTORY AND STATUS OF
THE YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO
IN CALIFORNIA

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo will be the star of our Oct. 10, program in San Francisco. Our speaker, **Dr. Steve Laymon**, has studied the California state endangered Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo for more than a decade, and is considered to be the world authority on this species. As the title suggests, Steve will discuss the identification, distribution, breeding and nesting ecology, food preferences, habitat use and many other aspects of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo natural history and status, learned from his research.

With all of these years studying cuckoos, we can expect impressive photos, including those documenting the excitement of banding cuckoos at 40 feet high. Back down on earth, Dr. Laymon will discuss the problems facing cuckoos on their wintering grounds, such as habitat loss and pesticide use. We will also learn about habitat restoration and other things that can be done for the Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

Dr. Steve Laymon is director and founder of the **Kern River Research Center**. (See *The GULL* for May, pp. 82-3.) He completed his PhD research on
(continued on page 152)

PRES. BUSH ATTACKS WETLANDS!
HELP GGAS FIGHT BACK!

On Aug. 9, 1991, President Bush officially launched an attack on all wetlands in the U.S. He styled this attack "Protecting America's Wetlands" but even a cursory reading reveals that the intent is to emasculate the present regulatory system that protects wetlands and replace it with a laissez-faire, developer's-dream-come-true, regulatory system.

The Bush program would cripple that part of the Clean Water Act, Section 404, that protects wetlands. Present estimates are that if this program is enacted, the Bay Area could lose 50% or more of its wetlands. One third of our nation's 100 million acres would face destruction.

In the face of this attack, GGAS must increase its efforts to preserve our Bay's wetlands. The one million or more shorebirds and the hundreds of thousands of ducks, geese and wading birds that depend on our wetlands will cease to exist if we fail. See **Conservation Notes** (p. 145) for details.

FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

Saturday, October 5—Coyote Hills Regional Park.

Sunday, October 6—Presidio.

Wednesday, October 9—Mini-trip to East Bay shoreline.

For details on the above see *The GULL* for September.

Saturday, October 12—Point Reyes National Seashore. Meet at Inverness Park at the Knave of Hearts Bakery on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. at 8 a.m. We will concentrate on shorebird identification at Abbot's Lagoon and Limantour Estero. Bring a scope if you have one, lunch and liquids, and comfortable walking shoes. Heavy rain cancels. (If in doubt, call.) Leader: Lina Jane Prairie (510) 549-3187. (✓)

Saturday, October 26—Alameda and San Leandro Shoreline. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in Alameda at Broadway and Shoreline Dr. We will bird the Elsie B. Roemer Sanctuary. Shorebirds should be present in numbers, so bring a spotting scope if you have one. Bring lunch and liquids. The afternoon will be spent visiting interesting and less frequented shorebird hot spots. Leader: Leora Feeney (510) 522-8525. (✓)

Saturday, October 26—Fourth Annual Point Reyes National Seashore All-day Fall Birding Blitz. (Non-competitive joint activity: GGAS and National Park Service.) Meet at 8 a.m. at Five Brooks Trail-head parking lot (about 3.5 miles south of Olema on Hwy. 1). We will bird Five Brooks Pond area, Limantour Spit, Drakes Beach, Chimney Rock and Point Reyes, ending at Bear Valley for a multi-habitat trip.

Bring food, water, and layer clothes for variable weather. Leader: Leon Abrams (415) 459-6366 (work), (510) 843-4107 (home). (✓)

Sunday, October 27—Tennessee Valley. Meet at 9 a.m. and bring lunch. Take Hwy. 101 north across the Golden Gate Bridge and take the Mill Valley exit under the Richardson Bay Bridge. In one-half mile turn left at the Tennessee Valley sign and drive to the end of the road. We will walk on a level trail looking for land and sea birds. Rain cancels trip. Leader: Betty Short (510) 921-3020 during working hours. (✓)

Saturday, November 9—Birds of Strybing Arboretum, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate near Ninth Ave. and Lincoln Way. We will look for birds in the various habitats of the Arboretum, including Red-shouldered Hawks, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, and White-throated Sparrows. Beginners, and all others, welcome. Leader: Alan Ridley (510) 566-3241.

Wednesday, November 13—Mini-trip to Aquatic Park, Berkeley, and other nearby areas. Meet at 9:30 a.m. in the northwest corner of Spenger's Restaurant parking lot (4th St.) to carpool. We should see returning shorebirds and migratory ducks. Lunch optional. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (✓).

Problems: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call **Russ Wilson**, Field Trips Committee Chmn. (510) 524-2399.

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

OBSERVATIONS THRU AUGUST 28

Blessed as we are with our mild winters, mid-summer around here is typically one of the least interesting times of the year birdwise—while juveniles and immatures flit about in good numbers confounding lookers with their less than usual plumages, most of our nesting birds have fledged young, turned silent and are preparing to leave; shorebirds are still gone; and ducks, when they can be found, have molted into eclipse plumage and all look like females. August ushers in the beginning of the best season for seabirds as well as the return of shorebirds, first the adults molting into basic plumage and then the youngsters looking so spiffy fresh in their new feathers. Pilgrimages to the local quagmires become the requisite order of business—places like the Spaletta Slop Ponds and the Moonglow Dairy, spots that make most sewer ponds seem like the Italian Riviera, are coveted destinations on the fall birding circuit. Not that birders are particularly masochists—the rewards far outweigh the stench which becomes like perfume when the stray Ruff or Buff-breasted Sandpiper or better wanders into view.

Rhapsodizing aside, the fall is off to a relatively slow start, but it's getting better. Up to four Black-footed Albatross, not normally found here in the late summer and fall, were seen on a Monterey pelagic on the 18th (MiF), with two more on a Farallon pelagic on the 23rd (MLE). Laysan Albatross, noteworthy at any time of the year, were around on pelagics on July 28, and August 4 and 12 (AdW, PJ, SFB). Early Buller's Shearwater individuals were spotted on July 28 and August 15 (AdW, SFB); two Black-vented Shearwaters, also early, were flying off

Pigeon Point on the 20th. One Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel was 10 miles west of the Farallones on the 17th (SFB); a phenomenal one hundred fifty Leach's Storm-Petrels made a long pelagic out of Sausalito on July 28 noteworthy (AdW). Hearts were set aflutter when a **Red-billed Tropicbird** showed up on a Monterey Bay pelagic on August 4 (DLS fide DGY). **Magnificent Frigatebirds** were a long way from Baja or any of their usual haunts when spotted over Angel Island on July 21 (SMi) and off Pt. Pinole on August 22 (RJR). Seagoers had multiple Long-tailed Jaegers: three on July 28 (AdW) and three more from August 14 to 17 (SFB) west of San Francisco and two in Monterey on August 24 (AdW); and good numbers of South Polar Skuas: one on July 28 (AdW) and eight from August 14 to 17 (SFB) west of San Francisco; and up to seven in Monterey Bay from August 17 to the 24th.

A total of fifteen Xantus' Murrelets were reported from various pelagic trips during this period. A Monterey pelagic had two Craveri's Murrelets on the 17th (DGY); a Farallon trip had two Horned Puffins on the 23rd (MLE).

A small spate of **Little Blue Herons**—Bodega Bay on the 18th (BR) and Albany on the 19th (AWi)—added to the hybrid Little Blue Heron/Snowy Egret which continues to be seen in Mountain View. The female King Eider, first reported from Moss Landing in early June, continued to be seen until July 26 (mob). A female-type Harlequin Duck was at the Fish Docks on the 27th (GFi).

Shorebirds abound. There are up to eight Lesser Golden-Plover at the Spaletta Palteau at this reporting (MJL, BDP, ABtt) and three Mountain Plover were at Mono Lake on the 24th (ES fide LJP). A **Bar-tailed Godwit** has haunted the Albany and Berkeley bay shoreline

since August 11th (CCr, JM, mob), moving from one cove to another and foraging diligently. This Asian stray which breeds in western Alaska is a smaller, less highly patterned cousin of our Marbled Godwit; searching for it along the shore becomes at the same time a good lesson in committing to memory the field marks of the supposedly intimately-known Marbled Godwit. Kenn Kaufman talks in *Advanced Birding* about the necessity of knowing well the identifying characteristics of our most familiar birds so that when something different comes along we're able to recognize it as such. The Bar-tailed Godwit is a good example; so too are the peeps where minute differences separate the usual from the rare.

An adult Stilt Sandpiper was at the Tracy Sewer Ponds from the 18th to the 22nd (DGY, FGB, GFi); three Buff-breasted Sandpipers were in San Jose on the 25th (PJM), two at the Spaletta Plateau on the 26th (ABtt); and individual Ruffs were at Pt. Reyes on July 20-22 (AWg, GFi) and at the Salinas River on August 2 (ELb). Other sightings included a total of nine Solitary Sandpipers, eight Semipalmated Sandpipers, seventy-six Baird's Sandpipers, and thirteen Pectoral Sandpipers.

Immature Franklin's Gulls, adding to this year's already-good-sized total, were reported from the Stockton Sewer Ponds on the 7th and a Monterey pelagic on the 24th. An exciting summer in the Eastern Sierra was highlighted by a **Yellow-footed Gull** at Crowley Lake from July 21 to 29 (PJM, PEG). This Mexican species has been found before at the Salton Sea, but this is a Northern California first. A **Black Skimmer**, seen first at Alameda on July 30, was seen again on August 26 (ACo, KTa).

Landbird reports are paltry in comparison to the foregoing. White-winged Dove individuals were in Hayward, Los Gatos and Half Moon Bay in early August (RJR, MiF, BS fide RSTh); a Lesser Nighthawk landed on a pelagic boat in Monterey Bay on the 17th (DGY); a male Rufous Hummingbird, very late for the coast, was seen at Stinson Beach on July 15 (DaS fide KH); there were four Willow Flycatchers at Mt. Diablo on August 27 (KGH) and another at Coyote Creek on the 18th (PJM); a Dusky Flycatcher in SF on the 13th (ASH); and an Eastern Kingbird in Santa Cruz on July 23 (RMrr).

There's a fair sprinkling of warblers: Virginia's Warbler at Mono Lake on August 12 and 20 (ES, GP); Northern Parula at Ano Nuevo from July 26 to August 13 (GJS, RSTh); Magnolia Warbler on Gazos Creek Rd. thru July 25 (CBe, mob); seven Black-throated Gray Warblers, seven Hermit Warblers, and one Blackpoll Warbler in a major wave at El Granada on the 14th (BS fide RSTh); Black-and-white Warblers at Tilden Park on July 2 (AB) and Bolinas Lagoon on August 11 (AdW); and American Redstarts at Ano Nuevo from July 26 to August 13 (GJS fide RSTh) and the Carmel River Mouth on August 10 (DSg). And last, though hardly least, there were Rose-breasted Grosbeaks in SF on August 13 (ASH) and at Stinson Gulch from the 15th to the 18th (RMS, AT).

For those trying to plan ahead for next summer, reports from the northern end of Crowley Lake at the Owens River mouth, in the Eastern Sierra, are very enticing: in early August there were several hundred Western and Eared Grebe nests with some pairs still doing mating dances at the same time other adults were ferrying their young around on their backs. There was nesting Forster's Tern this year, the

first record for Crowley Lake; and on August 11th, there were ten Black Terns. The place is teeming with wildlife and can provide hours or even days of interesting viewing.

OBSERVERS:

Stephen F. Bailey, Anthony Battiste, Christopher Benesh, Florence G. Bennett, Alan Betsky, Chris Carpenter, Andy Cowell, Ann Dewart, Joe Eaton, Alan M. Eisner, Michael L. Ezekial, Mike Feighner, George Finer, Philip E. Gordon, Keith Hansen, W. Edward Harper, Kevin G. Hintsa, Alan S. Hopkins, Steven N. G. Howell, Joan M. Humphrey, Paul Jones, John Kelly, Jeri M. Langham, Michael J. Larkin, Earl Lebow, David Lee, Leslie Lieurance, Calvin Lou, Robert V. Merrill, Peter J. Metropulos, Stefan Michalowski, Joe Morlan, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Greg Pasquariello, Lina J. Prairie, David E. Quady, Bob Raines, Robert J. Richmond, Mary Louise Rosegay, Barry Sauppe, Debra Love Shearwater, Dave Shuford, David Sibley, Dan Singer, Robert M. Stewart, Gary J. Strachan, Emilie Strauss, Arthur Taber, Ken Taylor, Scott B. Terrill, Ronald S. Thorne, David G. Yee, Adrian Wander, Alan Wight, Anna Wilcox, David Wimpfheimer.

—ANN DEWART

CONSERVATION NOTES

BUSH REDEFINES WETLANDS

The President is proposing a two pronged attack. First he is attempting to remove millions of acres of wetlands from regulatory protection by redefining them as uplands. For example, our Bay's seasonal wetlands will no longer be considered wetlands because they may not be saturated with water for 21 consecutive days, especially during a drought. Tell that to the over 1 million shorebirds and hundreds of thousands

of ducks that use these seasonal wetlands for feeding and roosting every year.

Two EPA wetland scientists who helped write the original wetland manual have resigned from the wetland definition committee, protesting these scientifically indefensible changes.

Secondly, the President is proposing to change the regulations themselves. He is proposing to categorize, or rank, wetlands. "Good" wetlands will still have a chance of being preserved (but they may be filled). Anything less than the highest category of wetland, however, will be developable without challenge. In these cases, mitigation (creation of new wetlands to replace destroyed ones) will be required, except in the states of Alaska and Louisiana where you won't even have to mitigate!

The Bush proposal would reduce the ability of resource agencies, such as the Fish and Wildlife Service and the EPA to comment on permit applications, and it would be significantly more difficult to appeal inappropriate permit approvals.

This is a very carefully crafted package of regulatory revisions aimed at opening up wetlands to development. Who is behind all this? A consortium of oil and gas industries, developers, realtors, agribusiness, and others have launched a campaign to eliminate or weaken Section 404. They call themselves the National Wetland Coalition and this year are spending over \$400,000 to lobby Congress. They have flooded Washington, D.C. with people relating Section 404 horror stories. 10,000 realtors invaded the Capitol telling our legislators how Section 404 is preventing economic recovery.

This group has obviously been very successful. They have convinced President Bush to unleash his attack. They have convinced Vice President Quayle,

because it is his Council on Competitiveness that proposed these changes to the President. And they have convinced 170 Representatives and 24 Senators who have co-sponsored wetland legislation that is nearly identical to the President's program.

They have been successful because we have been too quiet. What to do?

Write President Bush to withdraw his wetland program because it will mean tragic losses to this critical natural resource. Or call the White House Switchboard at 1-202-456-1111 and leave a message with the receptionist.

Write Senator John Seymour, already a co-sponsor and ask him to withdraw his sponsorship of S.1463.

Write your Representative to oppose HR 1330 (Hayes), the House companion bill to S.1463.

Or call the Capitol Switchboard 1-202-224-3121.

Such an effort requires financial support. Action alerts, mailings, litigation, if necessary, trips to Washington, D.C. to talk to legislators. For GGAS to play an effective role in this struggle we need your financial support.

Please make as generous a donation as possible. Checks should be payable to GGAS and sent to GGAS, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. This donation will be tax-deductible.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has determined that our nation has already lost over 50% of its historic wetlands, **and California over 91%.** If President Bush's program is enacted those losses will increase dramatically and our wetlands will face losses that parallel those of the tropical rainforests.

—ARTHUR FEINSTEIN
Conservation Chairman

WASHINGTON AUDUBON ACTION

Activists from Washington state Audubon chapters are gratified that their Senate has by resolution made 1991 Year of the Oak. It pledges to emphasize good oak forest management practices to ensure long-term viability of oak resources. It calls for enhancing wildlife habitat and maintaining biological diversity. Anyone wishing further information or interested in exchanging ideas may write to Rob Kavanaugh, 6919 41st Ave. S.E., Olympia, WA 98503.

AUDUBON'S TEN TOP TIPS FOR SAVING THE PLANET



RECYCLE: Locate your nearest recycling center and recycle aluminum, paper, glass, plastic, and whatever else is accepted. Purchase products made from recycled paper. Give away what you no longer need. Re-use plastic and paper cups and other goods when possible. Minimize throwaways.

BACK YARD BIRDER

Who ARE those guys? You know the ones who have birds named after them: Audubon, Wilson, Nuttall, Townsend, Cassin, Baird, Brewer, Lawrence, Coues? There are many more—at least 64 bird species have a person's name attached, as in Bewick's Wren, e.g. Most of these men were naturalists and many were bird biologists who found Philadelphia the "Athens of natural history in the U.S." These men lived extraordinary lives in exciting times.

John James Audubon (1785–1851) was born in Santo Domingo (now Haiti), the acknowledged bastard of a well-to-do sea merchant. His mother was probably a "free Creole woman." He was raised in France and received artistic training before coming to his father's farm in Pennsylvania in 1803. Like many other geniuses, Audubon was a poor businessman and not interested in workaday life. Instead he became fascinated by birds and spent four decades travelling through America east of the Rockies shooting and making life-sized watercolors of North American birds, while his wife supported him by teaching in the early days. Presenting himself as an American woodsman, he wore rustic, fur-trimmed outfits and long, flowing hair. But he was not so naive as he seemed as he successfully promoted himself and his art to Europe's high society. Today we value Audubon's artistic renderings. Original subscribers paid \$1,000 for four huge volumes of 435 plates; at a recent auction a complete elephant folio sold for \$440,000! In his journals and other writings, he shows wit and intelligence. He was also among the first to rather dramatically lament the destruction of our wilderness.

Preceding Audubon's arrival in the U.S. was Alexander Wilson (1766–1813), a Scotsman who came here in 1794. On his first day in America he

shot a Red-headed Woodpecker. It may be appalling to us today, but it was a means of gathering bird specimens for study. They didn't have our luxury of binoculars. Wilson roamed the eastern states making detailed observations on the biology of the birds he saw (and shot). These speculations have withstood the test of time. All 9 volumes of his *American Ornithology* were published from 1808–1814. He was a self-taught scientist and artist with a poetic bent. He was also very stubborn and sensitive to criticism, making him a touchy individual. When Audubon arrived on the scene they took bird walks together. A sort of rivalry arose and after Wilson's death, Audubon accused Wilson of copying a drawing. Ironically, several bird studies of Audubon's are very like those of Wilson's. Each man made his contributions to bird biology with Wilson being the scientific "father of American ornithology" and Audubon being the artistic sire.

A contemporary of these two men was Thomas Nuttall (1786–1859). He emigrated from England to the Philadelphia area and was chiefly interested in botany. Imagine in 1808 making long trips throughout the U.S. on *foot* collecting plants! Although his main contributions were in botany, Nuttall published the first field guide to N. A. birds, which was still in print in *this* century! As Coues said, "Nuttall, like good wine, does not deteriorate with age."

John Townsend (1809–51) had the bad fortune of trying to publish a work similar to Audubon's *Birds of America*. He never finished it but is remembered for an expedition he led to the Pacific N. W. during which several "new birds species were collected. He kindly named a poor-will and the Olive-sided Flycatcher after his friend Nuttall (*Nuttallornis borealis*).

Spencer Baird (1823–87) was a young naturalist raised in Pennsylvania who

made friends with Audubon before Baird was 20. He was interested in fish, reptiles and mammals as well as birds. As a linguist, politician and writer he eventually became secretary of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D. C. and persuaded Congress to build a museum of natural history. By encouraging military men to collect specimens in their travels he greatly expanded the museum's bird collections. From these and his own field work arose the first organized check list of avifauna. He also strongly supported Darwin, one of the first to do so.

Elliott Coues (1842-99) was a fascinating man. (Coues is pronounced *cows*). Born in New Hampshire, he was educated as a medical doctor. But he loved to write, eventually producing 1000 works. He was physically handsome and an electrifying person with humor, energy and a sense of eccentricity (e.g. he was a member of a spiritualist cult in his later years). He also possessed an acid tongue and took unattractive and arbitrary positions on subjects; and he was a fair-weather friend. Coues was one of the army surgeons who collected for Spencer Baird. He also was a founder of the American Ornithological Union and his 1882 check list of N. A. birds was a basis for the A. O. U. publication. Here are a few of his notes on what it was like to be a 19th century naturalist.

—how to clean your gun: "elbow grease."

—the wisdom of taking "stimulants" in the field: "none."

—the perils of skinning a putrid bird: "festering sores."

Like many others in the west, as a soldier he took part in Indian wars and complained about having to be part of the "massacre" of an Indian tribe. He was also an early champion of women's rights. Here was a man born too soon!

I wonder if I met any of these men to-

day if I could tolerate some of their idiosyncrasies? Mavericks, maybe. There's no doubt they were controversial but they were always interesting.

—MEG PAULETICH

PAUL L. WATTIS AUDUBON SANCTUARY DEDICATION

In April 1989 NAS acquired 500 acres in Colusa Co. for the purpose of creating a waterfowl sanctuary. The site has been restored to 200 acres of permanent wetlands and 300 acres of seasonal wetlands. Twenty-two nesting islands have been established, and the area has wintered thousands of Snow Geese, ducks and several hundred Sandhill Cranes.

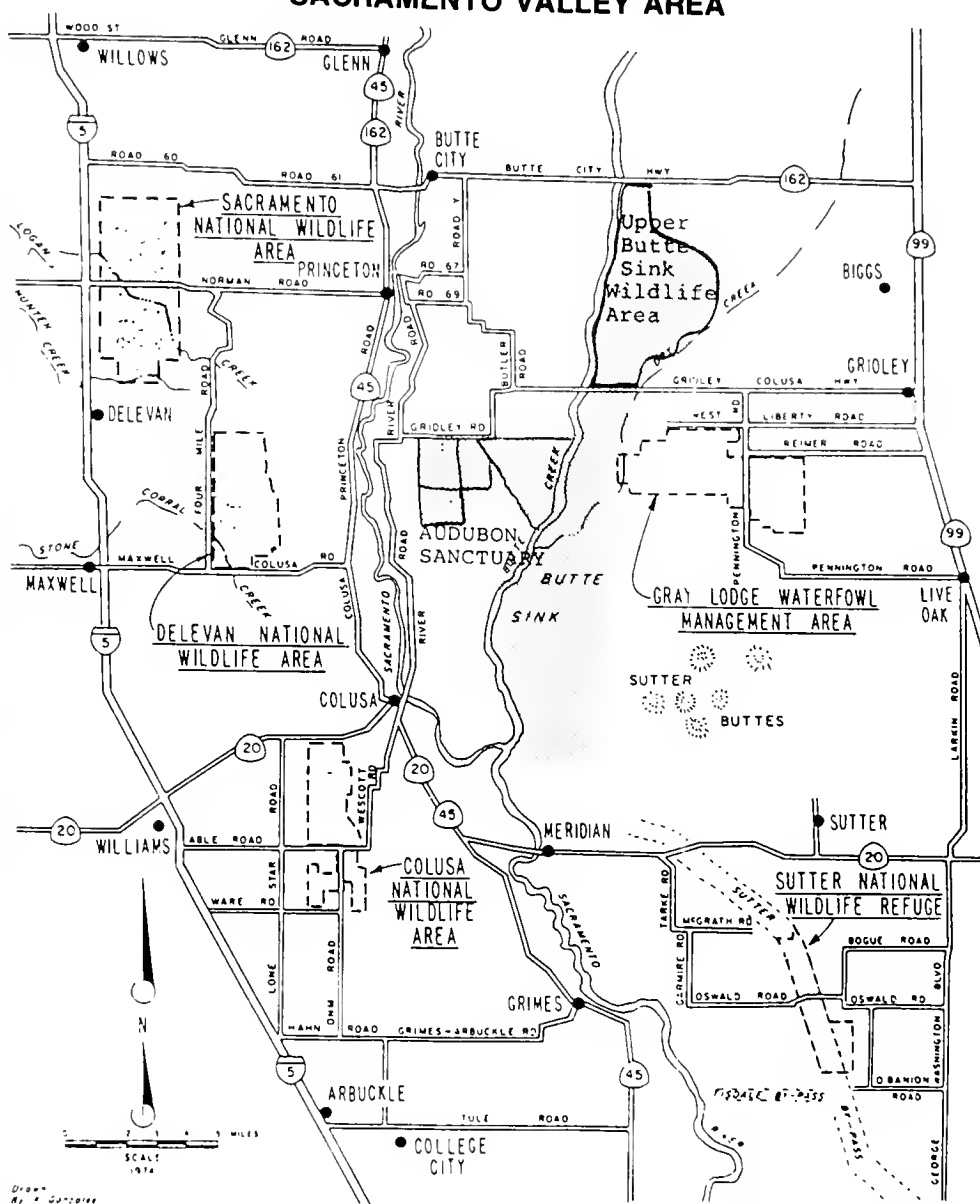
All GGAS members are invited to attend the sanctuary dedication at the site at 10 a.m., **Saturday, Oct. 19**. The sanctuary can be reached by travelling north from Colusa on River Road going east (right) on Gridley Road to the sanctuary. Audubon signs will point the way.

Birding trips and interpretive tours will be held throughout the day to help participants become better acquainted with the sanctuary. It is being held to coincide with the Colusa Waterfowl-Rice Fall Festival being held at the Colusa Co. Fairgrounds in the nearby town of Colusa, Oct. 19 and 20.

The sanctuary is a component of the Central Valley Joint Venture of the North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Program. Support for the sanctuary came from the Paul and Phyllis Wattis Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Major donor, Chris Steele, contributed the cost of restoration work.

Riparian corridors, including native willows and cottonwoods, are being encouraged along the perimeter and in certain interior locations. An existing oak woodland is being preserved and expanded.

SACRAMENTO VALLEY AREA



Department of Fish and Game

SF STATE UNIVERSITY FALL CAMPUS BIRD WALK

Join Dennis Beal, Professor of Art, at the **Fall Campus Bird Walk** on Sunday, Oct. 6, 1991. Bring lunch and liquids. Meet at the entrance of Parking Lot 7, Tapia Drive, off Font Blvd. at 8:30 a.m. For more information, phone Harriet Talan, (415) 338-2132.

BIRD LIST: NAPA RIVER ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

The Napa-Solano Audubon Society is asking the help of anyone who has birded the Napa River Ecological Reserve within the last ten years. A bird list is being developed for the reserve and anyone who has a dated bird list for the area is invited to send a copy to Ann

and David Smith, 1162 Green Valley Rd., Napa, CA 94558. Whether birds sited were common or rare, the data will be of help in compiling an accurate listing of birds of the refuge.

The Napa River Ecological Reserve is 73 acres of riparian oak woodland at the juncture of Conn Creek with the Napa River, located ½ mile west of the intersection of the Yountville Crossroad and the Silverado Trail in Napa Co. The bird list will be part of an effort by the California Dept. of Fish and Game to increase public awareness of this sheltered preserve by providing visitors with a bird list, plant list and a self-guiding nature trail.

LETTER

Dear GULL,

We live in the middle of San Francisco on the fifth floor of an apartment building. We've had a feeder and water source on a plank outside our window which is at the treetops. To date, we've seen more than forty species of birds including a flock of large Mexican parrots, an albino Scrub Jay and its blue and black mate, Pine Siskins, and even a Black-crowned Night-Heron one damp morning. Most of the birds do not come to the feeder, but having the feeder there makes us look more often and with more interest at the tops of the trees where dozens of species come and go throughout the year. Of course we have lively little House Finches which come year after year where they mate and teach their young to eat from the feeder. We have yellow, red, and yellow-orange varieties that look like dreamsicles. The reds, yellows, and oranges tend to feed separately, and the males separately from the females. We've observed them for hundreds of hours, as our dining table is next to the window, and our bed just across the room. It is not necessary to go to extremes to see innumerable species of

birds. Patience and a good bird book are all that are needed.

LATIF & ALPHA GARDNER-HARRIS

A QUAIL'S TALE (Part II)

When these birds first came to my backyard, I immediately checked my library for books on feeding backyard birds to see what I could provide for them in the way of extra food. I couldn't find any reference to "Quail." After some thought, I looked under "Bob White." Here I found that they eat mostly millet, wheat, and buckwheat. They are also known to eat cracked corn and breadcrumbs. I found a mix at the local Pet Store which they called "Quail/Dove Mix." They took to this mix readily. Also, I found that they like sunflower seeds and chopped peanuts. While researching material to learn about their diet, I was also reminded that these birds are classified as "Game".

Game: Among the 20 or so definitions listed in the dictionary included are; "a bird hunted for sport, meat, or used for food," "an amusement, fun, or sport of any kind," also "trick or strategy." I won't even try to describe my feelings at mention of the first definition. These birds are so beautiful and have provided so many hours of enjoyment, it is unthinkable that they should be hunted. I like the last definition. The trick or strategy in this case was for me to try to guess where she might have hidden their nest. The trick on their part was not really a trick, but their natural survival behavior. I thought at one point she might be nesting in the green house. There are several places where the lathe is broken near the ground. I decided foolishly to remove some plants and things so as not to disturb them. I choose a time when I knew they were in a neighbor's yard several houses away. I took out my seedlings and moved a large bag of mulch. About an hour later they returned. "Papa" immediately began to

scold. After 15 minutes or so of fussing, he and "His Lady" left. I never saw them go in there again. However he was always standing guard close by while she was about her business. I can't explain why I felt so eager to know where the nest was. My son suggested to me that had I known, I probably would have set up a 24-hour guard!

At any rate I will share with everyone the notes from my journal as follows:

Monday, July 1: "Papa" has spent all afternoon by himself in the garden. It is late and the yard is covered by the lengthening shadows. He stands motionless in the middle of the garden path. The brown of his back blends with the brown earth so that even as I look at him, he seems to disappear. A quick turn of his head now and then show the distinct white markings on his face and I know he is still there. A pair of towhees come down the path. A mother and a juvenile. She is still showing her offspring the ropes so to speak—looking for their last meal for the day. "Papa" pays no attention and remains in his spot for a while. Then suddenly he darts forward and picks up something. A beetle or bug the towhees overlooked?

Thursday, July 4: "His Lady" is gone for most of the day now. Came to the feeder for a short time in the morning and again in late afternoon.

Saturday, July 6: Am awakened by "Papa's" greetings. He seems to be talking to "His Lady" with a series of clucking and almost cooing.

Sunday, July 7: Haven't heard or seen "my" Quail all day. 5:00 p.m.: I hear Quail calls, "Where-ARE-you" several times. I go to the front door and step out. "His Lady" is perched on the peak of our roof. It does not seem to be an urgent call. She is preening in between calls. Then I see "Papa." He is running across the street several houses away and with each call he seems to run

a little faster, neck stretched at full length. As he comes across the last stretch of lawn before our house, she flies down to the ground and begins "talking" to him as they head for the backyard garden for food and water. (I imagine she is telling him that he is late and not to go so far away.)

As she is foraging for food "Papa" gives the familiar 3 note call. Sometimes it seems to me he is saying "come-BACK-here" or "Look-OUT-there." All the while she is answering in very soft almost liquid notes as she continues to search for food.

Thursday, July 11: "Papa" has been calling all day. "His Lady" has not appeared at the usual times. 6:00 p.m.: My neighbor from 2 houses down the street came to my front door. He said "I found the nest." I think "Oh o, something has happened!" He confirms my thoughts. "There are eggs scattered about." We go to his front yard and look. The nest was hidden behind some plants right next to his front steps. There were at least 14 eggs—the remains of several scattered outside the nest. We speculate on what it could have been, and he decides to leave it alone.

Early the next morning "Papa" began calling again. This time it is mostly a single note call. Would he coax her out of hiding and woo her all over again? It was not to be. After about 15 minutes he left. We never saw them again. I checked the nest again and there were only 5 eggs left in the nest. It was probably a rat. I think an opossum would have eaten all the eggs at once. Unfortunately, we have both of these animals living in our city sewers.

Everyone in the neighborhood was very sad. My backyard seems very lonesome without them. I hope they made it back "home" safely that next year's breeding season will be more

successful.

August 24: The Starlings that have just fledged are mimicking Quail sounds! Amazing!

—PAT DONATO

THIRD ANNUAL SCOPE AND BINOC SHOW

The **San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory** and the **Golden Gate Raptor Observatory** announce their third annual show: major manufacturers display their wares, lectures and workshops on gull, shorebird and hawk identification and care, feeding and selection of optical equipment. It will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 27 at Ft. Mason in San Francisco. For more details phone **SFBBO** (408) 946-6548 or **GGRO** (415) 331-0730.

RECORDING BENEFITS AUDUBON

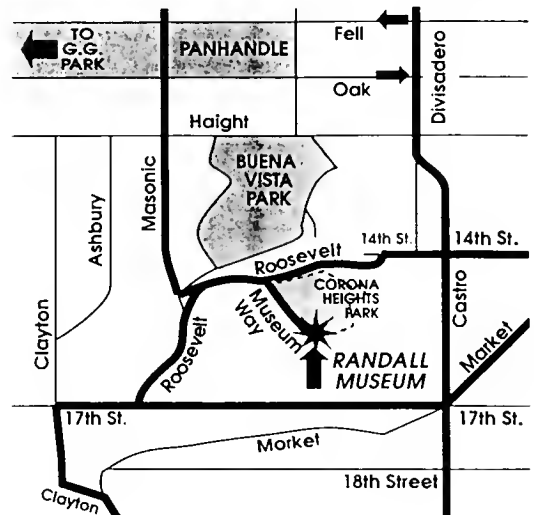
A recent recording, *The Narada Wilderness Collection*, celebrating wilderness and benefitting National Audubon, The Sierra Club and The Wilderness Society, is a treasury of specially commissioned songs by 17 artists.

In addition to donating a portion of the proceeds, Narada has distributed membership brochures at displays for the recording. Some retail stores have followed the lead and are contributing to local conservation organizations. Like the places that inspired it, the recording has a quiet serenity that is accessible to listeners of many tastes. It is available at most record stores.

CUCKOO (continued from page 141) the Spotted Owl habitat requirements, and studied the biogeography of riparian bird communities for his MS degree.

The program will begin at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 10 at the Josephine Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, San Francisco. Plenty of free parking is available (which may even be something as endangered as the cuckoo in San Francisco!).

—JOELLE BUFFA



FROM THE EAST: West on 14th St., across Market, until 14th St. veers left and becomes Roosevelt Wy. Continue one quarter mile, Museum Wy. is on the left.

FROM THE NORTH: South on Masonic, across the Panhandle, up and over the hill where Masonic merges with Roosevelt Wy. One block ahead on the right is Museum Wy.

FROM THE WEST AND SOUTH: Take Portola to upper Market, head downhill, turn left at the signal at Clayton St. Go uphill on Clayton, turn right at the 2nd signal (17th St.) then make the first left onto Roosevelt Wy. Museum Wy. is one quarter mile on the right.

SAN FRANCISCO'S MAYORAL RACE

The Conservation Committee sent a list of eight questions to each of the candidates for Mayor in San Francisco. No reply was received from Mr. Jordan or Mr. Hongisto, though the latter has asked the committee for advice on environmental concerns. Mr. Agnos' staff replied that he does not respond to such requests, and Mr. Hsieh, lacking time, sent a copy of a press release which was not responsive. Angela Alioto and Gloria La Riva each responded in detail. While *The GULL* cannot print the questionnaire in full because of space limitations, the following are three of the questions and their replies:

1. What will you and your administration do to maintain, increase and protect the amount of open space in San Francisco?

Ms. Alioto: "I favor preserving existing open space in San Francisco, including the land opened by demolition of the Embarcadero Freeway, as well as actively pursuing additional open space. I am currently investigating how we can amend the Master Plan to allow greater purchases of open space in San Francisco.

"With the City facing so many crucial decisions regarding open space, like the Presidio and Crystal Springs, it is vital to have city officials who are committed to preserving and expanding San Francisco's stock of open space. That is why I appointed Lynn Altschuler and Jill Hallinan to the San Francisco Open Space Committee."

Ms. La Riva: "I am in favor of increased hiring of parks workers (gardeners, etc.) to maintain our parks. For every new development, especially office and commercial development that is allowed, a certain amount of open space must be designated and protected from future development. The

cost of maintenance of such open spaces must be born by the developers. I am totally opposed to the South Bayshore Plan, which endangers the wetlands."

3. Will your administration support establishing a minimum water level for Lake Merced to maintain existing wetlands?

Ms. Alioto: "I am willing to study any proposal to maintain water level at Lake Merced to protect the wetlands."

Ms. La Riva: "Yes."

8. Currently, it is proposed that the public have access to Crystal Springs watershed acreage for recreational purposes. What will you and your administration do to protect the San Francisco watershed from bicycle riders, birders, hikers, fishermen and other potential watershed users to ensure the purity of the City's principal source of water?

Ms. Alioto: "I am opposed to the development of a Crystal Springs golf course. To put a golf course, which by its very nature will necessitate the extensive use of pesticides and large amounts of water, on watershed land is ludicrous. At this time, I do not support any expanded recreational uses at Crystal Springs. If environmental groups tell me that limited additional access to hikers/birders would not harm the wildlife or damage our drinking water supply, I would consider such a plan. However, my first priority is protecting the purity of our drinking water supply."

Ms. La Riva: "Although recreation is an important need of people, so is clean drinking water. I would oppose the opening up of the watershed acreage for recreation. Other areas can and should be developed as parks and recreational areas."

Obviously, GGAS is not in the business of recommending candidates for public office. The material submitted is printed as a public service. We are grateful to the respondents.

NEWS FROM OUR RANCH

Audubon Canyon Ranch (415) 868-9244
Shoreline Hwy., Stinson Beach, CA 94970
Wildlife Sanctuaries & Centers for Nature Education under joint sponsorship of Golden Gate, Madrone, Marin and Sequoia Audubon Societies
Gary Holloway, President

ACR SUPPORTS CAMPAIGN TO SAVE CALIFORNIA WETLANDS

A new Federal definition of wetlands will allow development of significant remnants of California's once vast wetland habitat. Newly threatened wetlands could include tidelands adjacent to ACR properties. In recognition of the threat to this ever diminishing habitat the ACR board of directors voted to add its support to the newly formed **Campaign to Save California Wetlands** with a donation of \$1000. For more information about this effort to save our wetlands call (510) 452-9261.

MYSTERY BIRD

ACR's August board meeting at Cypress Grove Preserve on Tomales Bay is always a favorite. The setting is beautiful, even board members don't get to see this very special preserve very often, and the company is excellent. But this year there was a special treat—a mystery bird. An ibis on Livermore Marsh is quite a wonder, especially when it's not a White-faced Ibis. It took a few days, but John Kelly and a number of other birders finally figured it was a Sacred Ibis. This one was banded and no doubt has escaped from a zoo or a private collection. So what if it wasn't the bird of the year, it was fun anyway.

VOLUNTEER FOR A TOMALES BAY SHOREBIRD COUNT

ACR's Tomales Bay Shorebird project continues to look for field observers who can help monitor shorebird populations around the bay. Beginning and ex-

perienced birders are invited to participate in upcoming shorebird counts. Call John Kelly at Cypress Grove Preserve for information (415) 663-8203.

FIELD STUDIES AT CYPRESS GROVE

Our field studies of migrating shorebirds began in August and will continue into September. Later in the season we will no doubt be counting water birds on Tomales Bay. Call John Kelly at (415) 663-8203 for more information.

MARY ANN SADLER

Long time docent, ACR director and past Secretary of our Board of Directors, Mary Ann Sadler, died recently after a long illness. Mary Ann's contributions to ACR were many and those of us who were fortunate to know her will miss her dry wit, her incisive comments and her friendship.

FALL SEMINARS

(Please register in advance for all seminars and workdays by calling (415) 868-9244.

Living Trusts: Tax and Estate Planning for the Nineties—Saturdays, Nov. 2 at Bouverie Audubon Preserve and Nov. 16 in Orinda. Learn how to decrease your taxes on appreciated property, increase your income, protect your estate and perhaps help a worthy cause. Please join us for one of these free seminars.

Bats, Toads and Autumn Tricks: A Family Halloween Celebration, Saturday and Sunday, October 26–27. Join ACR goblins Ray Peterson and John Kipping for celebration of autumn geared for the whole family. Nature study, crafts and baking make up only part of this overnight adventure at the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve. The best part has got to be the launching of the jack-o-lanterns on the lagoon on Saturday night. \$75 per family of 4.

Natural History of the Valley of the Moon—Saturday, October 26. Join John Petersen and Cathleen Canon to learn about the geology, flora, fauna and cultural heritage of the Bouverie Preserve. \$20 per person.

Fall Work Day—Saturday, November 9. Let's face it, the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve looks the way it does because of the work of numerous volunteers. Why not join with ACR staff and volunteers for a fun day of work at the Ranch. There will be a **FREE LUNCH** for volunteers. There is no fee for this event.

Coastal Prairie Restoration Day—Saturday, December 7. The work continues in restoring native grasslands at

our lovely Cypress Grove Preserve. Join John Kelly for this special project. This is a free event.

BOUVERIE PRESERVE GUIDED NATURE WALKS

Saturdays, Oct. 19, Nov. 16 and Dec. 14; 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The only way you can experience the beauty of the Bouverie Audubon Preserve in Glen Ellen is on one of our guided nature walks. Join a BAP docent for a free half day walk at the preserve. Reservations are taken as early as the beginning of the month preceding the walk of your choice. Call (707) 938-4554 to reserve your place.

—DAN MURPHY

GIFTS and BEQUESTS

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FOR GGAS

In Memory of Luga, a fine bird belonging to Delsie Austinson Muffy Thorne

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.



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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RARE BIRD ALERT (recorded) (510) 528-0288 Update: (510) 524-5592

Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$10 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$18 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917,
and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

The *Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.